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ILLICIT DRUG TRAFFIC AND SUPPLY, INCLUDING REPORTS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES OF THE COMMISSION

World situation with regard to illicit drug trafficking

Report of the Secretariat

Addendum

REPORTS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES

Chapter III of the report of the Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East on its thirty-second session (UNDCP/SUBCOM/1997/5) is reproduced in the annex to the present addendum at the request of the Government of Turkey.

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Annex

CONSIDERATION OF TOPICS BY WORKING GROUPS *

1. At its 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th meetings, on 19 and 20 February 1997, the Subcommission established working groups to examine five topics that it had identified at its thirty-first session. The observations made by the working groups and the conclusions reached after consideration of the issues are presented below. For the recommendations formulated by the working groups and approved by the plenary, see chapter I, section B.

A. Illicit drug trafficking by sea and smuggling of drugs in containers

2. The working group met once on 19 February 1997. In its consideration of the topic under review, the working group made the following observations:

(a) Trade volumes passing through the region by land and sea (over the Caspian Sea, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean) were increasing;

(b) A change in seizure patterns reflecting a decline in interceptions on "traditional" routes suggested that traffickers were altering their routes and modi operandi when transporting narcotics;

(c) Members cited specific examples of recent drug interception by sea in containers to illustrate the threat of illicit drug smuggling in regional trade;

(d) No State in the region had established special programmes to target container traffic and vessels of particular interest to investigators.

3. The working group drew the following conclusions:

(a) States needed to make use of the existing regional information exchange and analysis systems established by the World Customs Organization (at Riyadh and Warsaw) and through the National Central Bureaux of ICPO/Interpol;

(b) To maintain and enhance their effectiveness in the interception of illicit drugs smuggled within the legitimate container trade, drug law enforcement agencies needed to review their response to targeting and profiling vessels and containers.

B. Review of the establishment and functioning of a cooperation mechanism in the region

4. The working group met once on 19 February 1997. In its consideration of the topic under review, the working group made the following observations:

(a) There was concern about coordination between States members of the Subcommission, especially with regard to the flow of information;

(b) Mechanisms for liaison and coordination between member States were reportedly inadequate;

(c) Lack of financial resources complicated the task of member States in their fight against drug abuse and illicit trafficking;

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* Except for the numbering of paragraphs, chapter III of the report of the Subcommission on its thirty-second session (UNDCP/SUBCOM /1997/5) is reproduced without change.

(d) States members of the Subcommission sometimes did not send information about drug seizures to ICPO/Interpol.

5. The working group drew the following conclusions:

(a) Coordination between member States needed to be strengthened and enforced;

(b) A new mechanism needed to be introduced in order to achieve better coordination.

C. Exchange of views and information on drug-trafficking organizations

6. The working group met once on 20 February 1997. The representative of ICPO/Interpol, in introducing the item, commented on the highly sensitive nature of the matter under consideration, which the working group confirmed. The working group made the following observations:

(a) Illicit drug-trafficking groups active in the region normally operated at professional levels, were highly specialized and secretive, and always business-oriented in their drug-trafficking operations. Several groups operated in the region of the Subcommission, including Colombian cartels, the Sicilian Mafia and associated groups, as well as the Russian Mafia and emerging central and eastern European organizations;

(b) One member State provided information regarding linkages between drug trafficking and terrorist organizations. Several cases were outlined that demonstrated the involvement and active participation of the organization known as PKK in illicit drug trafficking, as well as its links to other criminal organizations;

(c) It was necessary to mobilize international efforts to suppress internationally organized criminal groups;

(d) All illicit drug-trafficking organizations maintained links with each other. Nevertheless, the sharing of information and intelligence on such existing links was not effective, making proper analysis difficult. Furthermore, existing systems for the exchange of information were not properly and fully utilized by States members of the Subcommission.

7. The working group drew the following conclusions:

(a) Existing information systems needed to be better organized to facilitate their full use, by member States, for the secure and confidential exchange of information on illicit drug-trafficking organizations;

(b) Agreements between Afghanistan, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Pakistan and Turkey on the extradition of drug offenders needed to be fully implemented, particularly for offenders operating within the framework of international criminal organizations;

(c) In order to improve the regular and permanent exchange of sensitive information on illicit drug-trafficking organizations, the Drug Liaison Officers network between countries in the region needed to be enhanced;

(d) The creation of an ICPO/Interpol subregional office in the Islamic Republic of Iran, as was proposed during a meeting of experts held in that country in 1994, could possibly contribute to a better exchange of sensitive information between the four above-mentioned States. Relevant consultations between ICPO/Interpol and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran are under way.

D. Illicit trafficking in precursors

8. The working group met twice on 20 February 1997. In its consideration of the topic under review, the working group made the following observations:

(a) Several major seizures of precursor chemicals, mainly acetic anhydride, had been made during 1996 in States of the region, and attempted diversions had been foiled in India, Pakistan, Turkey and Turkmenistan;

(b) Twenty-three States members of the Subcommission had responded to the questionnaire on implementation of the 1988 Convention; of those, seven reported that substances listed in Tables I and II of the 1988 Convention had been put under national control since the thirty-first session of the Subcommission;

(c) While national control schemes were in place in a growing number of countries, several members of the working group reported on existing problems in implementing successful national control procedures. The problems were due to the fact that, at the national level, several agencies were often involved in precursor control, that law enforcement agencies were not always informed, and that cooperation with trade representatives, chemical producers and traders was not fully functional.

9. The working group drew the following conclusions:

(a) Stricter control measures were required in countries manufacturing precursor chemicals;

(b) The subsequent movement of produced precursor chemicals through and to countries in the region of the Subcommission needed to be ensured;

(c) In order to ensure the above, exporting countries needed to provide advance export notifications to countries of destination;

(d) As regards the verification of legitimacy of transactions, not all States in the region appeared to be aware of such verification procedures in importing States of the Subcommission. Such knowledge was, nevertheless, essential for ensuring regional cooperation in precursor control.

E. Illicit cultivation, production and manufacture of drugs in the region

10. The working group met once on 19 February 1997. In its consideration of the topic under review, the working group made the following observations:

(a) Afghanistan represented the biggest problem in the region because of illicit cultivation, production and smuggling of opiates; worsening of the general situation in the country had also affected the processing and smuggling situation in the whole region;

(b) Increasing illicit cultivation of opium poppy in the Sinai region of Egypt, after beginning in the south, had moved north because of drug law enforcement action, although the eradication campaign in Egypt was still in its early stages;

(c) Illicit manufacturing, processing and trafficking in eastern Turkey was reported to be supported by PKK;

(d) Two and a half million hectares in Kazakstan were potentially available for illicit cultivation of cannabis, of which 180,000 hectares were actually utilized, leading to increased travel by international traffickers to Kazakstan to effect purchases. Total eradication of the illicit crop would create an enormous ecological problem. ICPO/Interpol reported that 6 laboratories were seized in Turkey and 12 in Pakistan in 1996. Further information was available on the existence of more laboratories processing opium into morphine base and morphine base into heroin for export through the Islamic Republic of Iran to western markets.

11. The working group drew the following conclusions:

(a) There was a need for increased joint actions against opium production in Afghanistan;

(b) Increasing illicit production and cultivation of drugs in Kazakstan and Egypt called for improved monitoring and more accurate assessment of the illicit capacity for drug production in those areas;

(c) States members of the Subcommission should be kept regularly informed about the situation in Egypt and Kazakstan.